


November 1, 1962
My personal file

Mr. Hilsman:

This is a stab at developing a running chronology of major developments in the Cuban crisis. Parts of it are far from complete, while some items I have included may have to be deleted.

As it now stands, the chronology would have to bear a SECRET classification, because of reference to the October 26 Khrushchev letter to President which has never been made public.

On p. 5, under date October 24, last item - I have not seen Khrushchev's letter (or message) to President of October 24, but President in his letter to Khrushchev of October 25 refers to latter's communication of the preceding day, and from context of President's letter it would appear that Khrushchev in his October 24 message denied that offensive weapons had been shipped to Cuba.

I am keeping this chronology up on a day-to-day basis for future reference

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CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CUBAN CRISIS

- July
- Prior reports from refugees and other sources of Soviet military activities in Cuba supplemented during month by information on important movements of Soviet military equipment and personnel into Cuba; more frequent air surveillance checks undertaken.
- August
- Continued reports received during month of significant movements of Soviet equipment and personnel; air surveillance flights continue.
- Sept. 5, Wed.
- President states Soviets have provided Cuba with a variety of missiles, but no evidence of offensive ground-to-ground missiles or of other significant offensive capabilities.
- Sept. 9, Sun.
- Chinese Communists shoot down U-2 flight over mainland China.
- Sept.
- Soviets issue assurances that no offensive weapons have been shipped to Cuba.
- Sept. 28, Fri.
- Air reconnaissance indicates possible shipments of Soviet Il-28 jet bombers to Cuba.

- Oct. - During early part of month further air surveillance handicapped because of heavy cloud cover over Cuba, followed by Hurricane Ella.
- Oct. 10, Wed. - Senator Keating states in Senate that he had received information that Soviets setting up intermediate range missile bases in Cuba.
- Oct. 13, Sat. - Bowles-Dobrynin conversation.
- Oct. 14, Sun. - Air reconnaissance flights over Cuba result in first firm evidence of construction of offensive missile sites.
- Oct. 15, Mon. - Photos of October 14 air reconnaissance processed and flown to Washington.
- Air reconnaissance stepped up.
- Oct. 16, Tue. - At 9:00 a.m. President shown photos from October 14 air reconnaissance flights with firm evidence of offensive missile base construction under way.
- President begins series of urgent conferences with top officials.

- Oct. 17, Wed. - President visits Connecticut for speaking engagements but returns to Washington same day for further high level meetings.
- Oct. 18, Thur. - President meets with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko to discuss Germany, Berlin and Cuba; Gromyko repeating Soviet assurances that no offensive weapons shipped to Cuba.
- Further evidence developed that offensive missile bases under construction.
- Oct. 19, Fri. - More evidence of rapid construction activity at offensive missile base sites.
- President departs Washington for scheduled speeches in Cleveland and West Coast.
- Oct. 20, Sat. - President suddenly calls off his tour and returns to Washington for urgent high-level conferences to consider action on Cuban crisis.
- Oct. 21, Sun. - President sends message to Khrushchev enclosing his speech scheduled for delivery October 22 and urging Soviets to refrain from any action that would widen or deepen the crisis; message to be delivered one hour before President speaks on October 22.

Oct. 22, Mon.

President delivers nationwide radio and television speech on Cuban crisis and US intention to establish naval quarantine to prevent further introduction of offensive weapons.

6:00 - Ambassadors and press briefed by Mr. Hilsman on offensive missile build-up in Cuba.

Oct. 23, Tue.

- Embassy London, on urging of Prime Minister MacMillan, releases air reconnaissance photographs showing construction of offensive missile bases in Cuba.
- Secretary meets with OAS which unanimously supports US position and action on Cuba.
- President signs order for naval quarantine to go into effect at 10:00 a.m.
- Air surveillance of Cuba stepped up.
- Moscow places armed forces of Warsaw Pact countries on alert.
- Ambassador Stevenson presents US case to UN Security Council.
- Unaligned Afro-Asians at UN urge Summit negotiations.

Oct. 24, Wed.

- Khrushchev in reply to telegram from Bertrand Russell calls for Summit meeting to deal with Cuban crisis.
- Acting Secretary General U Thant urges US and Soviet Union to suspend any further action for two weeks.
- Some Soviet ships en route to Cuba are reported to have altered course.
- Khrushchev sends message to President denying that offensive weapons have been shipped to Cuba.

Oct. 25, Thur.

- President sends letter to Khrushchev noting false Soviet statements concerning shipments of offensive weapons to Cuba and expressing hope Soviet Government will take necessary action to permit restoration of earlier situation.
- US Navy encounters Soviet tanker but permits it to proceed
- Khrushchev announces his agreement with U Thant's proposal that US and Soviet Union suspend any further action for two weeks.
- President declines U Thant's two-week suspension of action proposal.
- UN Security Council meets to consider Cuban crisis and heated exchange takes place between Ambassador Stevenson and Soviet representative Zorin.

Oct. 25, Thur.
(continued)

- U Thant sends letters to President and Khrushchev urging each to avoid a confrontation at the Cuban quarantine line for next few days.
- Walter Lippman advocates Cuba-Turkey base deal in his syndicated column.
- Austrian Foreign Minister Kreisky advances suggestion to US Charge that Cuba bases be withdrawn in exchange for withdrawal of US base in Turkey, and later broaches this idea at a political rally in Vienna but without specifying countries involved.

Oct. 26, Fri.

- US Navy stops and boards Lebanese vessel under charter to Soviet Government but permits ship to proceed.
- Khrushchev announces Soviet ships will keep away from quarantine area.
- President states that US will try to avoid direct confrontation at quarantine line for next few days.
- President releases report showing construction of offensive missile bases in Cuba is continuing in effort to achieve earliest operational capability.
- Khrushchev sends message to President offering to halt further arm shipments to Cuba if US will guarantee not to invade Cuba or support any forces planning to do so.

Oct. 28, Sun.
(continued)

- Secretary Rusk briefs Latin American Ambassadors and gives backgrounder to press.
- In reply which welcomes Khrushchev's proposal President also explains that plane which flew over Soviet Siberian territory was unarmed and without photographic equipment, but was taking air samples as result Soviet nuclear tests and had strayed from course through navigational error.
- Castro issues invitation to U Thant to visit Havana and makes series of "demands" to be met by US in any settlement of crisis, including withdrawal from Guantanamo Base.
- U Thant accepts Castro's invitation.
- Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov arrives in New York to join discussions with U Thant.

Oct. 29, Mon.

- President names three-man coordinating committee for negotiations to end Cuban crisis headed by McCloy with Under Secretary Ball and Deputy Defense Secretary Gilpatric as other members.
- U Thant confers with Soviet and US representatives at UN.

- US lifts naval quarantine at daylight for 48-hour period during U Thant's visit to Havana.
- US agrees to suspend air reconnaissance flights over Cuba during U Thant's visit.
- U Thant arrives in Havana for talks with Castro.
- Moscow announces First Deputy Premier Mikoyan to fly to Havana via New York.
- President cancels November 1 scheduled press conference.
- U Thant returns to New York after talks with Castro and states at Idlewild Airport that he was assured missile bases will be dismantled by November 2, but no agreement for UN inspection of dismantling.
- Mikoyan departs from Moscow for Havana.
- US Naval quarantine of Cuba resumed at daylight.
- US air surveillance to be resumed today.